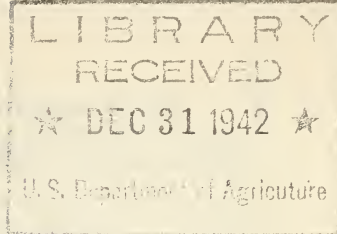


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REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PERSONNEL, 1942

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL,
Washington, D. C., October 6, 1942.

HON. CLAUDE R. WICKARD,
Secretary of Agriculture.

DEAR MR. SECRETARY: I respectfully submit the following report of personnel administration in the Department of Agriculture, covering the period from July 1, 1941, through June 30, 1942.

T. ROY REID, *Director of Personnel.*

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INTRODUCTION

The primary objective of the Office of Personnel is to contribute to winning the war by making the most effective use of the resources of human energy available to the Department. The individual efforts of the employees of the Office of Personnel have been directed to this end during the past year, against a rapidly changing background of significant events.

The war has necessitated the enactment of new laws affecting the employment situation in the Federal Government as a whole. The President has issued Executive orders of far-reaching effect to meet urgent administrative problems within the executive departments; the Civil Service Commission has revised certain of its rules and regulations; this Department has put into effect an extensive reorganization in order to meet squarely the responsibilities it must assume in wartime. Changes such as these, which affect people and their jobs, place good personnel administration in the forefront of activities which must be emphasized. The achievements of the Department in the concerted war effort can be significant only to the extent that its employees make them so. It is of primary importance, therefore, that the Department employ and retain the ablest, best qualified, and most efficient people it can find, particularly during a period of stress and strain, when precedents are scarce, when new laws or rules are the only mileposts, and when work assignments must be completed in record time.

DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

THEIR NUMBER

In June 1942 there were 74,013¹ persons employed by the Department, as compared with 82,740² in June 1941. This is a net decrease of 8,727 employees. In addition, between 200,000 and 300,000 persons, many of them part time, were engaged in carrying forward the Department's work serving in cooperative or collaborative capacities without compensation from the Department. Included in this large group were extension agents, county agricultural conservation committeemen and county committee office employees, Civilian Conservation Corps enrollees, and persons paid through the National Youth Administration and Work Projects Administration. Of the 74,013 persons employed by formal Secretarial appointment at the close of the fiscal year, 9,079 were stationed in the departmental service at Washington, D. C., and 64,934 located outside of the District of Columbia.

THEIR MOVEMENT

During the year 1942, some 178,000 personnel actions moving employees or changing their employment status were recommended or reported by chiefs of bureaus and reviewed finally in the Office of Personnel for Secretarial approval. This represents an increase in work load of 56 percent over 1941. The main causes for the increase were within-grade salary advancements under the Mead-Ramspeck Act of August 1, 1941, readjustments in salaries in the Farm Security Administration, status classifications under the Ramspeck Act of November 26, 1940, military furloughs, and transfers to agencies of higher priority classification. Promotions to higher grade positions within the Department reached the figure of 22,148 as compared with 16,655 during the previous year.

TURN-OVER

During the year 1941, 13,780 regular employees left the Department, representing a turn-over rate of 17.93 percent. During the year 1942, 26,228 employees left the Department, representing a turn-over rate of 35.25 percent. The figure 26,228 includes 6,336 employees who transferred to other Federal agencies without reemployment rights, 3,353 employees who went into military service, and 1,124 who left the Department with reemployment rights. Every indication shows a trend toward a still further rise in turn-over rate. The turn-over rate for both the Washington and field service was 35.25 percent, while the turn-over rate for Washington alone was 45.44 percent. This high rate was caused for the most part by transfers to other Federal agencies. One of the reasons for this was that the Bureau of the Budget on February 26, 1942, pursuant to an Executive order by the President, assigned relatively low priority classification ratings to most of the various bureaus and offices of the Department. Since em-

¹ This figure excludes 18,221 persons employed without formal Secretarial appointment for short tenures by letter of authorization.

² This figure excludes 3,771 persons employed without formal Secretarial appointment for short tenures by letter of authorization.

ployees who transferred to agencies with higher priority classification ratings were given reemployment rights in the Department, transfers from the Department were accelerated.

WITHIN-GRADE SALARY ADVANCEMENTS

From October 1, 1941, until the close of the year, within-grade salary advancements pursuant to the Mead-Ramspeck Act were approved for 28,384 employees. Seven employees of the Department received salary advancements for especially meritorious service. Of the total number of salary advancements, 47 percent were increments of \$60; 45.4 percent of \$100; 7.1 percent of \$200; and 0.4 percent of \$250. Because of the high turn-over rate, the total number of salary advancements has not affected salary averages generally. The salary rate of Department employees whose positions are subject to the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, was, in the majority of grades, less than one salary step above the minimum of the grade.

DECENTRALIZATION

Increasing pressure on available office and living space during the year made imperative the decentralization out of Washington of certain parts of the Federal executive agencies in order to relieve the congestion in the District of Columbia. In December 1941 the President announced a decentralization plan under the terms of which the Agricultural Adjustment Agency, the Farm Credit Administration, the Farm Security Administration, the Rural Electrification Administration, and the Office of the Solicitor were ordered to send large numbers of employees to new headquarters in the field service. Out of approximately 5,000 positions in the Washington offices of the bureaus involved, 3,626 were moved to locations in the field service.

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON SELECTIVE SERVICE

The Advisory Committee on Selective Service has continued to carry out the functions assigned to it in October of 1940 by the Secretary. On February 9, 1942, the President notified heads of departments of the general policy to be followed with respect to the deferment of Government employees from military training and service. This policy provided that requests for deferment could be made only by the Secretary or by a person designated by him, that requests could not be made unless the employee was in a position essential to the war effort and of a type for which replacements are difficult to obtain, and that steps be taken to recruit and train persons to replace those expected to go into the armed forces. The essential elements of this policy had already been adopted by the Department of Agriculture, immediately following the enactment of the Selective Training and Service Act. The committee carefully reviewed 978 requests for deferment, which included 209 requests for Reserve officers. Of the total, 704 requests for the deferment of Selective Service registrants were approved and 65 disapproved; 191 requests for Reserve officers were approved and 18 disapproved.

AT WORK IN THE OFFICE OF PERSONNEL

The Office of Personnel, under the Director, is divided into six divisions: Organization and Personnel Management, Classification, Employment, Training, Personnel Relations and Safety, and Investigations.

The Office of the Director integrates the personnel program with the research, technical, regulatory, inspection, administrative, and other programs of the Department; represents and acts for the Secretary in personnel management relationships with other Federal, State, or private agencies; and plans, organizes, directs, and coordinates all phases of a comprehensive personnel program for the Department.

CONSOLIDATION

In order to provide two important services, an executive office immediately under the Director of Personnel was brought into being on January 27, 1942. One of these services is performed in the Rules and Regulations Section. This section sifts the large number of new or changed rules and regulations issued by the President, the Civil Service Commission, the Comptroller General, and other authorities, and interprets those relating to personnel administration for application in the Department. In May 1942 a Manual of Personnel Circulars, containing rules and regulations governing personnel administration in the Department, was issued. This manual is a collection in loose-leaf form of all Personnel Circulars currently in effect, with a check list, concordance, and index.

The other of the two services is performed in the Administrative Service Section, which attends to all of the administrative operations necessary to the proper internal management of the entire Office of Personnel.

DIVISION OF ORGANIZATION AND PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Plans, organizes, and carries out the organization and personnel management program; surveys Department's organization, flow of work, and work-loan distribution to promote more effective use of personnel; studies and develops improvements in personnel procedures, forms, records, files, and organization for personnel work in the Department; reviews organization changes and recommends appropriate action by the Director of Personnel; develops and initiates proposals for personnel legislation and regulations; advises bureau officials and Director of Personnel on all matters of organization and personnel management.

The Department must be well organized and managed in order to function efficiently, to accomplish the purposes for which it was established, and to make its fullest contribution to the war effort. The Division of Organization and Personnel Management aims at positive service to the executives of the Department. This is achieved in two ways: First, by encouraging operating officials to bring in proposed organization changes for discussion while they are in the formative state; and, second, by conducting organization surveys of any part of the Department at the request of the Director of Personnel or other Department officials.

The year 1942 saw important organizational changes made in the Department. On December 15, 1941, 1 week after Pearl Harbor, the

Secretary announced that the 17 line agencies of the Department would be grouped for more effective action and coordinated effort under 8 administrators. Other organization changes were made to enable bureaus and offices of the Department to meet wartime needs more effectively.

During the year the Division participated in the formulation of nearly 50 organizational changes. It conducted over-all surveys in the Bureau of Animal Industry, the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, and the Bureau of Home Economics.

The Division developed improvements in personnel procedures, forms, and records. Recommendations streamlining the processing of personnel actions were made with a view to substantially reducing the cost of personnel work. Legislation was recommended authorizing the Secretary to delegate to bureau chiefs the appointing power for Washington departmental positions. This would make possible speedier and more effective recruiting of personnel.

The Department early recognized the critical problem of transporting employees to and from their work. The Division developed a share-your-car program in the Department, which served as a model when the President urged all Federal departments and agencies to work on this problem. As a result of the Department's program the maximum carrying capacity of nearly all the 1,700 automobiles bringing Department employees to work is being utilized. An interesting and worth-while outgrowth of this sharing of cars to and from work has been a widening acquaintance and a closer personal relationship among many of the employees of the Department.

The Division assisted in the organization of a management discussion group, which meets periodically to discuss management analysis methods and to exchange experience and information resulting from current projects in the various agencies.

DIVISION OF CLASSIFICATION

Plans, organizes, and carries out the functions affecting position classification and salary and wage administration; administers the Classification Act of 1923, as amended, as it applies to both the departmental and field services; develops and carries out policies and regulations governing compensation, minimum wages, and hours of work throughout the Department; surveys types of positions, establishes position classes, and prepares and issues class specifications; collaborates with bureau officials in the training and development of bureau classification investigators; develops and interprets classification and efficiency rating forms, procedures, instructions, and regulations; advises the Director of Personnel on all matters of classification, salary administration, and related matters.

Reorganization of the Department; expansion of lend-lease operations; changes in programs from a peacetime to a wartime basis; curtailment of certain programs for the duration; and losses of personnel to the armed forces, to other agencies of Government, and to private employers during the past year brought about changes in the duties and responsibilities of individual positions throughout the Department, requiring corresponding adjustments in classification. As a result, 85,567 classification actions were processed by the Division of Classification, an increase of 34 percent over the preceding year.

In accordance with a recommendation originating in the Division, the Civil Service Commission authorized a procedure for reporting on

lists to the Commission the establishment of additional identical positions and the filling of positions previously allocated, thereby eliminating the need for typing and processing a new classification sheet for each such action. Since these two types of actions comprise nearly 70 percent of the total, the saving in time, effort, and paper in the bureaus is considerable.

Complete specifications for the more common classes of positions in fire-control work in the Forest Service were developed and issued during the year. Some 4,000 positions, chiefly seasonal, are covered by these specifications. Specifications were also prepared for the positions of chemists in the meat-inspection laboratories of the Bureau of Animal Industry and for the technical positions in the Bangs' disease laboratories of that Bureau. Further progress was made on the development of specifications for the various classes of veterinary and nonveterinary inspectors of the Bureau of Animal Industry. About 4,000 positions will be covered by these specifications when completed.

Because of the serious shortage of trained classification workers, attention was given to the training of beginners. Fifteen trainees participated in a systematic course of instruction that was given from September 9 to December 9, 1941, and numerous other persons detailed to the Division by the bureaus from time to time were given informal instruction during the course of the year. The Division also sent representatives to participate in training programs organized by the bureaus for their personnel workers.

DIVISION OF EMPLOYMENT

Plans, organizes, and carries out the comprehensive employment program for both Washington and the field service, including recruitment, placement, testing, transfer, promotion, leave, and retirement; reviews for legality and for compliance with standard qualifications all recommendations for appointments and changes in status; compiles employment information and coordinates the dissemination of that information through educational institutions, professional societies, Federal and State agencies, and other groups; maintains central personnel records for the Department; advises the Director of Personnel on all employment problems.

The work of the Division of Employment was greatly affected during the first part of the past year by the continuing impact of the national defense program, and after December 7, 1941, by the necessity of disposing of increased work loads occasioned by the war activities of the Department. Change upon change was made in Federal and Department employment policy and practice with a view to filling vacancies speedily with the best qualified eligibles available. A brief chronological review of the more significant changes, referred to above, follows:

On July 26, 1941, the President issued Executive Order No. 8833, which permitted the classification, under the Ramspeck Act of November 26, 1940, of certain status quo employees³ in the Department and others appointed from the emergency replacement list, and authorized the promotion or transfer of certain non-civil-service employees eligible for classification under the Ramspeck Act.

³ Status quo employees are those who, although they have not acquired a civil service status, have been retained in positions which have become subject to classified civil service requirements.

In the Mead-Ramspeck Act, approved August 1, 1941, Congress enacted a uniform within-grade salary advancement plan for employees occupying positions subject to the compensation schedules of the Classification Act of 1923, as amended. In Executive Order No. 8842, dated August 1, 1941, the President made provision for granting within-grade salary advancements to employees in positions classified under the salary schedules of Executive Order No. 6746. An act approved on August 1, 1941, granted compensation for accumulated or accrued leave earned in their civilian positions to be paid to employees when ordered to active duty with the military or naval forces. The Service Extension Act, approved August 18, 1941, conferred reemployment benefits upon every person who, subsequent to May 1, 1940, had entered the armed forces of the United States.

The President, on October 1, 1941, signed an amendment proposed by this Department, to a previous Executive order to authorize the Civil Service Commission, in its discretion, to exempt certain appointees employed temporarily for emergency duty from the requirement of being fingerprinted prior to appointment. In a letter dated October 6, 1941, to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Civil Service Commission authorized the Department to effect intradepartment transfers and changes in status without the prior approval of the Civil Service Commission in individual cases.

The President, on November 13, 1941, issued Executive Order No. 8939 upon the request of the Department, authorizing the transfer and classification of certain employees in the Farm Security Administration.

On December 30, 1941, the President issued a similar order, No. 9005, also proposed by the Department, to permit the transfer and classification of certain personnel paid from allotted Emergency Relief Act funds. On the same date, the President completely revised Schedules A and B of the Civil Service Rules, in which were set forth, respectively, positions which are excepted from competitive examination and positions which may be filled noncompetitively. The revised schedules contained the majority of positions recommended for inclusion therein by the Department.

In January 1942 the War Department notified the Department that, beginning with the 15th of that month, Reserve officers would be considered available for active duty. The Civil Service Retirement Act was further amended by an act of Congress, approved January 24, 1942, a measure which resulted in doubling the employee coverage in the Department, as compared with the former retirement law.

In a letter dated February 2, 1942, to the Secretary of Agriculture, the Civil Service Commission, in response to a request by the Department, granted prior authority to the Department for the duration of the national emergency to make emergency appointments in positions outside of Washington, D. C., which must be filled without delay and which are not provided for by special regulations, for such part of 60 days as may be necessary. On the same day the Commission approved another request made by the Department to secure authority to make temporary appointments pending reinstatement, both at Washington, D. C., and in the field service, without the prior approval of the Civil Service Commission. On February 16, 1942, the President in Executive Order No. 9063, authorized the Civil Service Com-

mission to adopt special procedures relating to the recruitment, placement, and change in status of persons in Federal employ, and 4 days later provided for the transfer of personnel to war agencies in Executive Order No. 9067. Pursuant to these two orders, and the fixing of the priority classification of Federal agencies or activities by the Director of the Bureau of the Budget, the Civil Service Commission revised the Civil Service Rules by issuing War Service Regulations, which were completely in force by March 16, 1942.

On March 28, April 1, and June 20, 1942, special authorities were granted and procedures prescribed by the Director of Personnel with respect to the employment of personnel in the Farm Security Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, and Farm Credit Administration, occasioned by the move of their headquarters offices to Cincinnati, Ohio, and to St. Louis and Kansas City, Mo.

The sequence of congressional enactments and Presidential and other administrative orders outlined above is indicative of the revolutionary changes which took place in personnel administration.

The Division of Employment, while seeing to the application of these and many less significant determinations, adjusted its own internal organization and procedure to meet the new conditions. The Division made approximately three times as many placements—some 1,500—within the Department during the fiscal year 1942, as it did during the previous year. As a result of the encouragement of promotion from within, approximately 50 percent of all vacancies occurring in the various bureaus and offices were filled by persons already employed in the Department. Five percent of the total number of vacancies were filled by interbureau transfer. Vacancies were advertised on bulletin boards. Bureaus and offices of the Department were asked to submit monthly estimates of their personnel requirements. A special clearing-house placement service was established within the Division for the sole purpose of locating either employees who wished to go to cities to which the headquarters offices of decentralized agencies were being moved, or employees of such agencies who wished to remain in Washington, D. C. Concurrent with the establishment of the War Transfer Unit at the Civil Service Commission in February 1942, the Division of Employment organized a unit for facilitating intradepartment and interdepartment transfers. Between March 28, 1942, and June 30, 1942, about 4,000 war-transfer releases were obtained through the Division of Employment.

DIVISION OF TRAINING

Plans, organizes, and carries out training programs on the departmental level and generally integrates and supervises training in the Department of Agriculture; through the Department Training Council establishes policies, programs, and standards for training; organizes USDA clubs throughout the field; advises the Director on all matters pertaining to training.

- To insure the greatest possible utilization of the abilities of the people who make up the Department, it is not sufficient merely to hire competent personnel. There must be a constant effort on the part of all administrative and supervisory personnel to provide in-service training, which will enable every employee to do his job in the most effective manner and to be prepared when called upon to assume the responsibilities of higher positions.

Those responsible for in-service training were faced with a serious problem during the year owing to the Department's losing many experienced employees and the difficulty of recruiting trained people to replace those going into military service or transferring to other Departments. At the same time the Department had to meet increased demands for training in connection with new programs resulting from the war.

To cope with this situation, the Division centered its efforts on supervisory training. A special Committee on Improvement of Supervision, with the aid of the Division of Training, developed several training techniques and aids which were in use in several bureaus and offices prior to the close of the year. Of these aids the publication *Suggestions to Supervisors for Quickly and Effectively Training New Employees and Developing Understudies* proved to be of most value to those responsible for supervision. An important step was taken during May 1942 to introduce the experience and suggestions of field personnel into the whole training program by holding a week's conference of 25 field administrators and personnel and training officers from the Western States at Woodland Park, Colo. Reorientation programs were carried on to help both regular and new employees understand the essential importance of their cooperation in a victory achievement for agriculture. More than 1,700 new workers attended the orientation meetings held monthly in Washington, D. C. The Department Training Council, made up of a representative of each bureau and office in the Department, actively functioned in a reviewing and advisory capacity on matters of training. The Division assisted in the publication of a new bulletin, the USDA, designed to furnish special orientation material for new employees in the field service.

More than 7,000 field employees of the Department were active in the affairs of 79 USDA clubs located throughout the United States. Through these, the Division of Training encouraged individual employees to discuss and correlate ideas of mutual interest, to acquire a broader knowledge of the Department's war effort, and to prepare themselves to interpret the Department's services to those with whom they came in contact. This activity was promoted by correspondence, by news letters, and by scheduling speakers from Washington to meet with the clubs.

The Division conducted training courses on letter and report writing for various bureaus and offices of the Department. It gave demonstrations on the care of the typewriter to over 1,300 stenographers and typists. Classes for retraining stenographers were conducted. To expedite the study of personnel needs and the development of a replacement training program, the Division of Training was itself reorganized into three sections: Pre-Service Training, Administrative Training, and Technical and Professional Training.

DIVISION OF PERSONNEL RELATIONS AND SAFETY

Plans, organizes, and carries out the personnel relations, safety, and health programs; initiates methods for improving employee relationships and adjustment of employee grievances and complaints; develops an over-all safety program and coordinates the Bureau safety programs; makes safety inspections and investigates serious and fatal accidents; directs the health and first-aid program of the Department; coordinates employee activities and promotes desirable

new activities; promotes uniform practices in the application of the efficiency rating plan; advises the Director on all matters of employee relations and safety.

Finding the ablest people available to work in the Department and maintaining an effective training program are important factors in increasing the Department's efficiency, but there is another equally vital factor which has a profound effect upon the caliber of the work performed by the people employed in the Department of Agriculture. This factor is the desire of each and every employee to do his utmost to further the aims and purposes of the organization in which he works.

Government service is sometimes said to be impersonal, with no human interest in the problems and personal relationships of its employees. The Department of Agriculture, however, through the Division of Personnel Relations and Safety, evinces its deep interest in the welfare and morale of the thousands of people who are its employees.

EMPLOYEE RELATIONS

The Division of Personnel Relations and Safety offers the employees of the Department a place where they may come with their grievances that have not been or cannot be adjusted by their own supervisors and bureaus. That so few cases reached this Division during the past year reflects credit on the bureaus for adjusting grievances before they reach an acute stage.

Under Memorandum No. 753, Revised, each employee has the right to appeal to an impartial board. During the year, 44 employees availed themselves of this right. The Department Board of Review on Efficiency Ratings, which was organized on September 15, 1941, in accordance with the Ramspeck Act of November 26, 1940, heard the appeals of 18 Washington employees.

EMPLOYEE WELFARE

There are a number of employee organizations in the Department that provide benefits and leisure-time activities for their members. Among the largest are the Welfare Association, of which each appointee to a position in the departmental service at Washington, D. C., automatically becomes a member; the Credit Union, which offers a plan whereby employees may save for future security; and the Beneficial Association, a mutual nonprofit association of employees which offers life insurance to employees in amounts up to \$3,000. Recreational opportunities for departmental employees in Washington during the year were considerably reduced because of the necessity of utilizing many recreational facilities for war purposes. Every effort was made, however, by the Athletic and Recreational Association to organize and maintain activities in which employees were interested. The Division cooperated with the association by making available as much information as possible concerning facilities in the District of Columbia for recreational and cultural opportunities.

The Welfare Association operates the cafeterias in the Department, in which 1,897,823 meals were served during the year; it made emergency loans to employees totaling \$7,900.22; made grants for athletic and recreational activities totaling \$991.94; provided a revolving fund of \$2,000 in connection with the Department's bond-buying

program; and allotted \$1,000 for equipping first-aid stations in connection with the civilian defense program.

SAFETY

The Division constantly promoted measures for the safety of employees of the Department. For the third consecutive year the accident record of the Department has shown substantial improvement. During the year there were 46 accidental deaths in connection with the far-flung activities of the Department, as compared with 65 the previous year. Progress was made in developing a farm safety program. At the close of the fiscal year efforts were made to expand this program as rapidly as possible. The Division also sponsored first-aid courses. From September 1941 to June 30, 1942, 67 instructors were trained. They gave instruction to 2,500 Washington and Beltsville employees. Field offices reported approximately 3,000 trained people available.

HEALTH

Positive action was taken during the year to promote a health program. Several emergency rooms were maintained where first-aid treatment was given by trained nurses during working hours. During the year, 38,882 employees were treated. Of these, 380 were sent to the United States Public Health Dispensary for further treatment. Blood donations were made by 739 employees for the Red Cross blood bank, and 639 employees were typed as voluntary blood donors, to be available if other employees of the Department should need blood.

WAR BONDS

The pay-roll allotment plan for the purchase of war savings bonds was adopted early in June 1942 so as to afford an opportunity for employees to participate directly in the war program.

DIVISION OF INVESTIGATIONS

Plans, organizes, and carries out the personnel investigations program; directs periodic inspections of field stations and offices; reviews disciplinary cases and advises the Director regarding the action to be taken; reviews answers to charges and makes recommendations to the Secretary regarding dismissals.

In 1942 the Division conducted 471 personnel and 362 special investigations. These 833 investigations represented an increase of approximately 74 percent over the number made in the preceding year. In addition to its investigative work, the Division gave consideration to 1,192 cases submitted by the various bureaus and offices, most of which were for the imposition of disciplinary penalties on account of delinquency, misconduct, or fiscal and other irregularities on the part of the employees. This work resulted in 932 separate personnel actions.

CIVILIAN PUBLIC SERVICE CAMPS

The National Selective Service System assigned to this Department during the year 30 Civilian Public Service Camps, 17 of which were established at Forest Service projects and 13 at Soil Conservation

Service projects. A total of 3,008 conscientious objectors were assigned to the camps. The number of assignees in each camp varied from 21 to 205. The Director of Personnel is responsible for utilizing these camps to the fullest extent.

A policy outlining work priorities for conscientious objectors at the camps was promulgated by the Secretary, providing that they be used first as laborers on farms producing vital agricultural products in areas where a farm-labor shortage exists; second, in forest-fire control; and third, in soil conservation and reforestation.

A memorandum of understanding was adopted by the Selective Service System, the United States Employment Service, the National Service Board for Religious Objectors, and the Department of Agriculture, under the terms of which qualified conscientious objectors who volunteered could be assigned on a year-round basis to work on dairy farms in the principal dairy-producing sections where labor shortages exist.

RACE RELATIONS

An effort was made during the year to improve the status of Negro employees. In the Washington offices the number of Negro employees increased by 109. In addition, some Negroes have been employed in or promoted to key positions within the Department.

The Office of Personnel informed Negro colleges and universities of the types and kinds of positions available in the Department. Visits were made to several of these institutions, and suggestions for revisions of courses were given upon request. Information was given as to preparation for Federal employment through civil service examination and as to opportunities for career work in the Federal civil service.

A representative was sent to a number of national and State Negro meetings at which agricultural, business, educational, and civic affairs were discussed. The work of the Department, with special emphasis upon its services to Negro agricultural producers and consumers, was stressed at these meetings.

DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY

Since September 19, 1940, the Office of Personnel has encouraged bureaus and offices of the Department to carry out personnel operations under a system of delegated authority. Use of this authority, delegated by the Secretary, enables designated field officials in the bureaus to classify positions under certain conditions, recruit and transfer employees, and take certain disciplinary measures. During the year 124 field employment officers in 6 bureaus located at 46 different stations throughout the United States were operating under this authority and were responsible for completing approximately one-fourth of the total number of personnel actions recommended and approved in the Department. The Office of Personnel is continuing its effort to delegate still further authority of this type to field officials, so as to permit appointments and other personnel actions to be made as close as possible to the spot where the work is to be done.

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